

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, EG, US, UR

SUBJECT: CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER (CAT) TALKS BRIEFINGS

1. ON AUGUST 17, ACDA OFFICIALS BRIEFED EMBASSY OF EGYPT COUNSELOR ABDULLAH FOUAD-HAFIZ ON RECENT US-USSR CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER RESTRAINT TALKS IN HELSINKI. NEA/EGY AND NEA/RA OFFICERS ATTENDED THE BRIEFING.

2. IN OPENING THE SESSION, ACDA OFFICERS EXPLAINED THAT IN SEEKING TO PERSUADE MAJOR ARMS SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS OF THE NEED FOR ARMS RESTRAINT, THE US HAD DECIDED TO OBTAIN IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE COOPERATION OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE SECOND LARGEST WORLD ARMS SUPPLIER. TO THAT END, THE USG HAD ENTERED INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON A GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ARMS RESTRAINT GUIDELINES. IN RESPONSE TO FOUAD-HAFIZ'S INQUIRY, ADCA OFFICIALS SAID THAT THE USG HAD DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF ARMS RESTRAINT
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WITH MAJOR EUROPEAN SUPPLYING STATES AND HAD KEPT THEM FULLY ADVISED OF THE US/USSR TALKS.

3. ACDA OFFICIALS THEN BRIEFED MR. FOUAD-HAFIZ ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: A) BACKGROUND: THE US AND SOVIETS HAVE MET THREE TIMES TO DISCUSS CONVENTIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT. A

SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE REALLY BEGAN ONLY IN MAY, AFTER WHICH THE SIDES ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE IN WHICH THEY AGREED (1) THAT THE PROBLEM OF LIMITING ARMS TRANSFERS WAS URGENT AND (2) TO HOLD REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS TO EXPLORE CONCRETE MEASURES THAT COULD BE TAKEN.

-- IN MAY THE SSOD ADOPTED A PROGRAM OF ACTION CALLING FOR CONSULTATIONS AMONG SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS ON LIMITING ARMS TRANSFERS. US-SOVIET BILATERAL MEETINGS REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT THAT UN MANDATE.

-- EVENTS IN LATIN AMERICA, SUCH AS THE JUNE 22 DECLARATION BY THE EIGHT SIGNATORIES OF THE 1974 DECLARATION OF AYACHUCHO CALLING FOR A LATIN AMERICAN AGREEMENT LIMITING CONVENTIONAL ARMS AND THE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS OF MEXICO TOWARD THE SAME END, ALSO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORK OF RESTRAINING ARMS TRANSFERS.

B) OVERALL FRAMEWORK FOR RESTRAINT - THE US OUTLINED A FRAMEWORK OF RESTRAINT TO THE SOVIETS, AS A WAY OF FOCUSING THE DELIBERATIONS. THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK CONSISTS OF THREE PARTS.

(1) POLITICAL/LEGAL CRITERIA

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-- THESE CRITERIA WOULD BE BASED ON THE UN CHARTER, UN RESOLUTIONS, AND OTHER INTERNATIONALLY AGREED DOCUMENTS.

-- THEY SHOULD SERVE TWO PURPOSES: (1) IDENTIFYING LEGAL CONSTRAINTS ON ARMS TRANSFERS; AND (2) IDENTIFYING RELEVANT POLITICAL FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN MAKING ARMS TRANSFER DECISIONS.

-- A GOOD BASIS EXISTS FOR THE ELABORATION OF MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE.

(2) MILITARY/TECHNICAL CRITERIA

-- COMMONLY AGREED MILITARY/TECHNICAL CRITERIA TO SET BOUNDARIES ON THE TYPES AND AMOUNTS OF WEAPONS TO BE PROVIDED .

-- THESE CRITERIA ARE EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT AS POLITICAL/LEGAL CRITERIA; AND AGREEMENT ON BOTH TYPES OF CRITERIA IS ESSENTIAL IN ORDER TO HAVE A COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR RESTRAINT.

(3) REGIONAL APPLICATION

-- ARRANGEMENTS TO APPLY CRITERIA IN REGIONAL CONTEXTS.

-- IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO CRITERIA THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE GENERAL AND ABSTRACT STATEMENTS OF INTEREST, SUBJECT TO MANY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.

C. INTERIM RESTRAINT REGIME

-- BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT, IN ADVANCE OF FINAL AGREEMENT ON CRITERIA, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO REACH INTERIM RESTRAINT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPECIFIC REGIONS.

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-- A BASIS WAS LAID THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT CONSIST OF LISTS OF WEAPONS TO BE RESTRAINED.

-- BOTH SIDES AGREED IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DISCUSS ANY REGION OR SUB-REGION OF THE WORLD, PROVIDED THEY WERE NOT ARTIFICIALLY CONTRIVED.

D. ROLE OF OTHER SUPPLIERS/RECIPIENTS

-- BOTH SIDES RECOGNIZED THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS IN DEVELOPING AND/OR SUPPORTING ANY RESTRAINT REGIME.

-- BOTH SIDES WERE HOPEFUL THAT OTHER SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS WOULD FIND IT IN THEIR INTERESTS TO SUPPORT ARMS TRANSFER RESTRAINT.

-- WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS OUR POSITION THAT THE LEGITIMATE DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS OF RECIPIENTS MUST BE MET.

E. ASSESSMENT OF ROUND III AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

-- THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE MOVEMENT TOWARD A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF GENERAL GUIDELINES OR CRITERIA FOR RESTRAINT IN ARMS TRANSFERS.

-- THE SOVIETS AGAIN APPEARED TO TAKE THESE DISCUSSIONS SERIOUSLY. HOWEVER, THE NEXT ROUND -- TENTATIVELY PLANNED FOR DECEMBER TO ENABLE BOTH SIDES TO UNDERTAKE THOROUGH PREPARATIONS -- WILL PROVIDE A TEXT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR NEAR-TERM SUCCESS OF CAT.

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(END OF TALKING POINTS.)

4. FOUAD-HAFIZ INQUIRED WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF CAT RESTRAINTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ACDA OFFICIALS INFORMED HIM THAT THE MIDDLE EAST HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED.

5. FOUAD-HAFIZ OBSERVED THAT IN DEVELOPING CRITERIA IT WAS DIFFICULT TO IGNORE ARMS BUILD-UPS IN IRAN, IRAQ, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA. ACDA OFFICIALS RESPONDED THAT, IN ITS TALKS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, THE US HAD INSISTED THAT RESTRAINT CRITERIA MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS OF RECIPIENT NATIONS.

6. FOUAD-HAFIZ INQUIRED ABOUT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIETS IN PARTICIPATING IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS. ACDA OFFICIALS RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD THUS FAR DEMONSTRATED SERIOUSNESS IN THE TALKS BUT, THEY NOTED, A BETTER TEST WOULD COME IN THE NEXT ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS, SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER, WHICH WOULD FEATURE SPECIFIC TYPES OF WEAPONS THAT MIGHT BE LIMITED.

7. FOUAD-HAFIZ EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD RESUPPLY ITS MIDDLE EASTERN CLIENTS, SUCH AS IRAQ, THROUGH EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES. ADCA OFFICIALS REPLIED THAT THE NECESSARY MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN TO DEAL WITH OBVIOUS LOOP-HOLES SUCH AS THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS.

8. ACDA OFFICIALS STRESSED THE USG'S INTEREST IN GAINING THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF MAJOR RECIPIENT NATIONS FOR THE US-USSR TALKS -- TALKS THAT WERE FULLY IN KEEPING WITH US ARMS SALES POLICY GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED IN MAY 1977.

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9. CITING NEWS REPORTS THAT THE USG WAS PRESENTLY REVIEWING REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL ARMS FOR ISRAEL, FOUAD-HAFIZ OBSERVED THAT THOSE GUIDELINES DID NOT PREVENT THE US FROM CONSISTENTLY SUPPLYING THE ISRAELIS WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF ARMS. ACDA OFFICIALS REPLIED THAT ALL REQUESTS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WERE CONSIDERED IN LIGHT OF THE MAY 1977 U.S. GUIDELINES, AND THAT THE DECISION EARLIER

THIS YEAR TO SELL F-5S TO EGYPT AND F-15S TO SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL HAD BEEN IN RESPONSE TO IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. ACDA OFFICIALS ADDED THAT US ARMS RESTRAINT POLICY REMAINS IN EFFECT.

10. MR. FOUAD-HAFIZ THANKED THE ACDA OFFICIALS FOR THE BRIEFINGS AND SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH THEM FOLLOWING THE US-SOVIET TALKS IN DECEMBER. ACDA OFFICIALS ASSURED HIM THAT THEY WOULD BE GLAD TO BRING HIM UP TO DATE CONCERNING THOSE DISCUSSIONS.

11. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO DRAW ON TALKING POINTS OUTLINED IN PARA 3 FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

12. DEPARTMENT (PM/NEA) AND ACDA PRESENTLY BRIEFING EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES OF INDIA, JORDAN, PAKISTAN, ISRAEL, MOROCCO, AND SAUDI ARABIA. SELECTED COUNTRIES IN OTHER REGIONS ALSO BEING BRIEFED. CHRISTOPHER

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